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BREYFOGLE AWARDED MULTIYEAR GRANT TO STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY IN RUSSIA



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Mershon affiliate Nicholas Breyfogle is one of a team of transnational researchers about to embark on a challenging, far flung adventure.

Six top scholars in diverse fields - history, geography, environmental sciences, and economics — will push the boundaries of their disciplines, form a lasting collaborative network, and forge a new paradigm for understanding the work they undertake.



They represent six cooperating universities: Ohio State, Georgetown, University of York, University of Glasgow, National Research University-Higher School of Economics (St. Petersburg), and European University at St. Petersburg, and three countries: the United States, Great Britain, and Russia.

Their work, funded by Great Britain's Leverhulme Trust, tackles a multidisciplinary project, officially named, "Exploring Russia's Environmental History and Natural Resources." They will carry out collaborative field work at three unique, ecologically significant sites in Russia over a four-year period.

"Ultimately, this is an effort to rethink how we understand the environmental history of Eurasia in a comparative context, and to do so in a way that will enhance our understandings of ecological changes today," Breyfogle said.

This August, they head to the Arctic and the White Sea's Solovetskii Islands that have been inhabited fishing communities since pre-history and are now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

During 2014-15, they travel to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in Ukraine to work on the site of one of the great environmental disasters of the 20th century.

In 2015-16, Breyfogle will coordinate work on the third site: Lake Baikal, the oldest (25 million years) and deepest (more than a mile down) lake in the world and the topic of his forthcoming book, *Baikal: the Great Lake and its People*.

Breyfogle's research on Lake Baikul was supported by a grant from the Mershon Center. Mershon also supported his 2011 conference "Eurasian Environments: Nature and Ecology in Eurasian History."

Breyfogle is co-editor of the Department of History's online magazine *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*. He has received several awards and honors including Ohio State's Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award in 2011.

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1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614-292-1681 | Fax: 614-292-2407

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